

May 7, 2019

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Alice P. Arena, President
Fore River Residents Against the Compressor Station
P.O. Box 485
Weymouth, MA 02190

David A. Wilson
Executive Director, State Ethics Commission
One Ashburton Place, Room 619
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Director Wilson,

The recent departure of Secretary Matthew Beaton from the MA Department of Energy and Environment to TRC Environmental is the subject of this letter and subsequent requests of your office.

Our group (FRRACS) has been working for four years to stop the siting of a high pressure gas (methane) compressor station on the banks of the Fore River in Weymouth. If you are unfamiliar with our work, please go to nocompressor.com for an overview. This proposed compressor station poses health, safety, environmental, and economic hazards to the four communities (Weymouth, Quincy, Braintree, and Hingham) abutting the proposed site.

Secretary Beaton has had oversight of departments that could possibly permit this compressor station despite the more than obvious dangers of this siting. We are sure that you are aware that he had oversight on the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Coastal Zone Management (CZM), and the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) with who we have been in constant communication over the past years. He was privy to all appeals, information, and confidential communications between FRRACS, our attorneys, and these departments.

Further, on February 19, 2019, Secretary Beaton (and staff persons from EEA) met with me, as President of FRRACS, and a group of other coalition members to discuss the air quality permitting and health impact assessment that had been released in January. This meeting was called at our request. At that meeting, Secretary Beaton was given a large amount of documentation regarding our studies on air quality, health, environment, and infrastructure that—although most of it available to the public given many months of research—would have been difficult for his departments or members of the public to have obtained. These documents included certain pieces of information regarding the new Fore River Bridge, the MWRA pumping station, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) regulations, and many documents that might not be seen by the general public as they were correspondences to Federal agencies from our group or from individual members of our group.

On April 29, 2019, it was announced that Sec. Beaton would be leaving to join TRC Environmental. TRC Environmental is the consultant working directly with Enbridge to site the compressor in Weymouth. TRC has acted on behalf of Enbridge in front of the Weymouth Conservation Commission and published or assisted with the development of the Resource Reports and the Environmental Assessment for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). TRC was also the “independent consultant” who performed the work on the contamination of the proposed site that was subsequently sited for non-compliance by the DEP.

We are deeply concerned about the appearance of unethical behavior by former Sec. Beaton. Under the Conflict of Interest Law for State Employees, we find:

(d) Self-dealing and nepotism. Participating as a state employee in a matter in which you, your immediate family, your business organization, or your future employer has a financial interest is prohibited. (See Section 6)

A state employee may not participate in any particular matter in which he or a member of his immediate family (parents, children, siblings, spouse, and spouse's parents, children, and siblings) has a financial interest. **He also may not participate in any particular matter in which a prospective employer, or a business organization of which he is a director, officer, trustee, or employee has a financial interest.** Participation includes discussing as well as voting on a matter, and delegating a matter to someone else.

We would find it incredulous that the former Secretary was offered such a high level position with TRC without a protracted interview process. Leaving for such a position a mere two months after meeting with us and accepting our highly researched information gives the appearance to a “reasonable person” of impropriety. It simply does not pass the “smell test.”

We have reached out to other departments and legislators and are aware that Mr. Beaton was required to file a letter with your department as soon as he began the interview process with TRC. We are requesting a copy of this letter or form. We are also requesting a copy of all correspondence between Mr. Beaton, the EEA, the DEP, CZM, the DPU, the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB), Governor Baker’s office, Enbridge/Spectra/Algonquin, and TRC Environmental pertaining to the Weymouth Compressor Station and permitting processes for the past 12 months.

In the interest of fairness and transparency, we are hoping that you will be able to assist us in complying with these requests. We are ready to file Freedom of Information Acts for all of the above correspondence, if necessary.

Thank you for your assistance in this very serious matter.

Sincerely,

Alice P. Arena

Alice P. Arena, President
FRRACS

781-223-4796

CC: Eve Slattery, General Counsel
Kathleen Theoharides, Secretary of Energy and Environment